

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
DIVISION OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

SOP #402.6

Date Issued: 10/98

Date Revised: 5/17

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TITLE: Sentinel Rodent Exposure
SCOPE: All Authorized Personnel
RESPONSIBILITY: Facility Manager and Technical Staff
PURPOSE: Expose Sentinel Animals to Possible Pathogens in Animal Rooms

I. PURPOSE

1. To outline the proper procedures for exposing sentinel rodents to soiled bedding.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Facility Manager is responsible for ensuring:
 - a. All animal care staff is adequately trained to perform the husbandry practices described.
 - b. Implementation of the procedures described.
2. It is the responsibility of the animal care staff to read, understand, and follow the procedures outlined below.

III. PROCEDURES

1. **Sentinel rodents are pair housed** in individual microisolator or ventilated cages, and are placed on each rack with like species with the exception of isolation housing rooms located in the Stabile Research Building (SRB) which will use pooled fecal samples in conjunction with collection of air handling unit/rack exhaust plenums sampling in lieu of dirty bedding sentinels. Racks housing mice on both sides will have 2 sentinel cages, one located on each side of the rack.
2. **All racks must be labeled** with the rack number (see **SOP #410**). In addition, racks housing mice on both sides must be labeled to identify one side as A and the opposite side as B.
3. To maximize exposure to potential infectious agents, **upon arrival all sentinel rodents are housed solely on soiled bedding** obtained from other cages on the same rack/side. Mouse sentinels in cage A are housed on the soiled bedding obtained from mice housed on rack-side A. When mice are housed on both sides of a rack a second pair of sentinels, in sentinel cage B, are housed on the soiled bedding obtained from mice housed on rack-side B.
4. **Sentinels will continue to be exposed to dirty bedding for at least ten weeks** according to the cage change-out schedule of the animals they represent (e.g., sentinels for single housed rodents are changed/exposed once weekly, sentinels for

- multiple housed rodents are changed/exposed twice weekly, sentinels for rodents housed in ventilated cages are changed/exposed every two weeks).
5. Place an additional clean cage or container, for sentinel cage A on the changing station or cart while changing cages from side A. When using a container to collect the soiled bedding, the container must be used for one side of a rack only and must then be replaced or discarded.
 6. Place a small amount of **soiled bedding from each cage** being changed from side A into the clean cage/container for sentinel A.
 7. Place mice from sentinel cage A into the cage with the soiled bedding.
 8. Repeat for mice from sentinel cage B by obtaining soiled bedding from each cage on side B.
 9. Rat sentinel cages may be placed anywhere on the rack and are bedded with soiled bedding pooled from all cages on that rack.
 10. **Repeat these steps for all sentinels** in each rodent room.
 11. This procedure is to be followed at every room change.
 12. Feed and water sentinels according to **SOP 400**.

Approved:

Date: